(c) whether some nationalised banks have also filed their cases in the courts for the recovery of the said amounts; and

(d) if so, the latest position thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Disinvestment

4356 DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to restructure the equity participation in 40 Major PSUs for disinvestment;

(b) if so, the total disinvestment made uptill now and the extent to which it has been proved beneficial; and

(c) the total number of public sector units restructured so far?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) The Government have referred 40 PSUs to the Disinvestment Commission and they are now looking at them. So far no disinvestment or restructuring has taken place in these PSUs during 96-97.

SAFTA Agreement

4357. SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of the agreement of South Asian Free Trade Area;

(b) the likely date of its coming into operation; and

(c) the level of trade undertaken among SAFTA countries during the last three years, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) The 'SAARC' Preferential Trading Arrangement-(SAPTA)' has become operational with effect from 7.12.1995 with SAARC Member Countries granting mutual tariff concessions.

The Commerce Ministers of SAARC Member States and leaders of delegations in a meeting held in New Delhi on 8-9 Jan 1996 while reiterating their commitment to accelerating the SAPTA process decided that the South Asian Free Trade Area should be realised preferably by 2000 AD but not later than 2005 AD.

(c) The details of India's trade with the SAARC Member Countries are as under :

India's Exports **Rs. Crores/ (% age growth)**

	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	Maldives	Nepal	Bhutan
1993-94	1349.31	903.23	200.96	24.88	307.84	31.16
	(31.12)	(25.75)	(36.63)	(11.87)	(46.69)	(395.88)
1994-95	2024.13	1151	179.71	48.28	377.03	34.93
	(50.01)	(27.44)	(-10.57)	(94.04)	(22.48)	(11.76)
1995-96	3469.91	1335.62	256.8	52.52	536.45	57.56
	(71.43)	(16.03)	(42.9)	(8.78)	(42.28)	(54.79)

India's Imports **Rs. Crores/ (% age growth)**

	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	Maldives	Nepal	Bhutan
1993-94	56.07	62.82	136.68	1.02	90.68	9.35
	(151.14)	(57.59)	(-63.60)	(259.75)	(61.41)	(166.24)
1994-95	119.82	88.12	165.61	0.73	114.89	57.40
	(113.70)	(40.27)	(121.17)	(-28.87)	(26.70)	(513.96)
1995-96	282.13	145.83	150.8	0.55	166.95	107.2
	(135.5)	(65.5)	(-8.94)	(-24.66)	(45.31)	(86.76)

Pending Cases for EPCG Licences

4358. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether many licences under Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme were cleared recently by D.G.F.T. and are now pending for approval of the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof, case-wise; and

(c) the time by which these licneces are likely to be cleared by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). Yes Sir. Those cases approved by the Committee of Secretaries for availing benefits of Zero Duty EPCG Scheme, where the CIF value of the Capital Goods to be imported, exceeds Rs. 100 crores, requires approval of Commerce Minister/Finance Minister before the licences are issued and such cases have been submitted for approval. Details are as follows :

1. M/s. Parsrampuria Synthetic Ltd.
2. M/s. Malvika Steel Ltd.
3. M/s. Usha Ispat Ltd.
4. M/s. International Aluminimum Products
5. M/s. Tata Engg and Locomotive C. Ltd.
6. M/s. Owen Corning (I) P. Ltd.
7. M/s. Reliance Industries Ltd.
8. M/s. Reliance Industries Ltd.

Decision on the above is expected shortly.

Assistance to Assam

4359. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken/proposed to take measures to improve the flow of instuitutional finance for industrial development of Assam and N.E. States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). The decision to locate a project in a particular State/Region vests with the entrepreneurs who, in turn is guided by such factors as the level of infrastructure facilities available in the State, availability of raw materials, skilled labour and proximity of market. With a view to accelerating industrial development, a new public financial institution named as North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFI) has been established to finance creation, expansion and modernisation of industrial enterprises and infrastructure projects in the North Eastern Region including the State of Assam, Nothwithstanding the establishment of NEDFi, it would be the endeavour of All India Financial Institutions to assist all financially, economically, commercially viable and technically feasible projects coming-up in Assam and other States of North Eastern Region.

Insurance Claims in J & K

4360. SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount paid by various Insurance Companies in Jammu and Kashmir in lieu of the killings, fire and other damages caused since the outbreak of violence and terrorism in the state;

(b) the number of timber depots burnt each year and the amount paid by various Insurance Companies to the State owned Forest Corporation of Jammu and Kashmir and the number of pending claims alongwith the amount involved therein;

(c) whether the Insurance Companies have decided not to insure timber depots of the Jammu and Kashmir State Forest Corporation particularly in Doda District, and

(d) if so, since when this decision has been taken and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d). The General Insurance Corporation (GIC) has reported that an amount of Rs. 11140.80 lakhs worth of insurance claims were paid by the general insurance industry since the out-break of violence and terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Between the period 1991-92 to 1993-94, 38 claims were reported and an amount of Rs. 1644.02 lakhs has been paid towards claims settlement. Another 11 claims to the extent of about Rs. 723.86 lakhs are still pending with the companies for settlement. In November 1994, the revised premium rate proposed by the general insurance industry for providing insurance cover to the timber depots was not accepted by J and K State Forest Corporation including the depots located in Doda District.

Fraud by Financial Companies

4361. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question 1036 dated March 8, 1996 and state :

(a) the details of delinquent companies against whom the R.B.I. has taken action for contravention of its directions; and

(b) the number of letters/complaints received by the R.B.I. and the Government for non-payment of principal and interest on deposits by these companies during the last three years and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of India has reported that as per the present regulatory framework only the deposit acceptance activities of Non-Banking Financial Companies, Miscellaneous Non-Banking Companies and Residuary Non-Banking Companies are regulated by three sets of Directions issued by it in accordance with the provisions of the RBI Act, 1934. These directions stipulate ceiling on deposits, rate of interest on deposits, maintenance of liquid assets, etc. The RBI is empowered to take action